

Starry Night Encounter

一期一会 “ichi-go ichi-e”

“Starry Night Encounter” is my personal translation of the Japanese term “**ichi-go ichi-e**”. It is an idea found in Zen Buddhism and in the concept of the transitory nature of things. The term is particularly adopted in the Japanese tea ceremony: a 7'x7' space, a guest, a simple serving of a cup of tea.

One should delight in each encounter as if it were a “once-in-a-lifetime” occurrence. Treat every meeting as if it is the first and the last because it may not come again, or the same meeting repeats infinite times.

In my recent work, I am going back to this very basic feeling in a personal way. Using a fictional and symbolic space, I condense experienced and imagined multi-layered encountering events. I appreciate every encounter with a person, a creature, a tree, a flower, a rock, a room, a book, a song, a painting or a life.

In my youth, I wanted to pursue writing fiction. I still strongly believe in fiction's ability to express the deepest truths. In these compositions, libraries, museums, public spaces and performance halls are intermingled with images of the cosmos. It's my fiction writing: incomplete, fragmented and under inquiry.

Through this working process, I am trying to come to terms with the complex reality of the 21st Century. And my vision stays pathetically optimistic.

Michiko Itatani 2016